

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YMCAs OF CANADA

NATIONAL LINGUISTIC CENTRE

YMCA of Montreal
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NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

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PREFACE

It is not necessary at this point to refer once again to the historical background of YMCAs of Canada. There is ample documentation to recall the stages of this federation, unique by its philosophy and its presence in all levels of the Canadian community.

For the past 12 years, the YMCAs of Canada have been analysing the Canadian reality and its cultural and linguistic pluralism. The very essence of the YMCA philosophy, as is well known, is based on the recognition of this pluralism, the respect of the individual, and the development of man within a collectivity. The Canadian collectivity brings together two founding peoples of different cultural and linguistic heritage. The population of Canada consists principally of English speaking and French speaking people, which form the membership, both present and future, of YMCAs.

In accordance to their principles, YMCAs must not only serve the entire community but also respect provincial, regional, and local differences. Limiting the services of YMCAs to one Canadian group only is out of the question. To be a reflection of the Canadian community implies the recognition of a true bilingualism. From the West Coast to the East Coast of Canada, English speaking and French speaking people live side by side. In order to be able to meet the various requirements of the Canadian community, YMCAs of Canada have taken the necessary measures and adopted a definite position regarding Canadian bilingualism that led to a "National Language Policy" approved by the National Board of Directors of YMCAs of Canada on February 24, 1979.

NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

(annexe I)

The text is concise and clear.

A- PREFACE (annexe I - p. 1-2)

- 1- History of YMCAs of Canada
- 2- 1976: Resolution to provide services and communications bilingually where requested or necessary.
- 3- There are 16 Associations across Canada serving communities where there are significant numbers of French speaking Canadians.

Increase the capacity to serve in both languages.

B- GOALS OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY (annexe I - p. 5)

C- OBJECTIVES OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY (annexe I - p. 3-4)

- 1- To ensure that both the Toronto and Ottawa offices have the ability to represent the National Council in both official languages.
 - no later than June 1983
- 2- To ensure that the materials and publications of the National Council reflect the linguistic realities of the YMCA federation.
 - no later than June 1981
- 3- National projects or training events must have the capacity to serve in both official languages
 - no later than June 1981

Will be in both languages:

 - written materials
 - questionnaires - reports
 - training events, trips
 - Planning and Management groups
 - possible support from National Council
 - no later than June 1981
 - The National council will conduct an annual orientation program.

D- NATIONAL YMCA LINGUISTIC CENTRE (annexe I - p. 5)

- contractual arrangement with the YMCA of Montreal
- major functions of the Center
- a National co-ordinator.

*1 Modifications

Some modifications have been made in the original text. Thus, all the target dates have been postponed for a year. The National Linguistic Centre started its operations on December 1st 1979.

*2 Contractual Arrangement with the Montreal YMCA

The practical application of this linguistic policy at a National level began on December 1st 1979, but this important project related to the YMCAs and the national reality had been studied for several years. Financial support from the Federal Government has permitted to put these studies on bilingualism into a more concrete form. A contractual arrangement has been made with the Montreal YMCA, an Association that has promoted bilingualism in its operations since 1975. The annexed documents (Annexes II and III) detail the charges accomplished over a four-year period.

Thanks to the National Linguistic Centre, the Montreal YMCA will be able to guide and orientate, up to a certain point, the other Associations having to meet the requirements of the Canadian duality.

THE MONTREAL YMCA

(Annexes II-III)

1- In the 60's, the Montreal YMCA began to see the need to serve the total community and not simply a selected constituency. As Montreal is a community consisting mainly of Francophones, the need to work in both official languages also emerged as an increasing priority. The YMCA National Conference at York University in 1968 opened the doors and the Montreal YMCA began its efforts. Various projects had already exposed the need and the possibility for an organisation such as the YMCA to work within the French speaking community of Montreal.

2- The 70's represent the manifestation of this aspiration through the implementation of functional bilingualism. The adoption of the Linguistic Policy in 1975 consecrated the role of the Montreal YMCA: to be the reflection of the community as a whole. 1979 was the target date to meet these objectives.

The annexed document (Annexe III) details this evolution. The quantitative analysis illustrates the sustained effort of the Montreal YMCA to meet the requirements of the community through the use of the two official languages. The projects, the contribution of bilingual volunteers, the professional French speaking staff, etc. permit us to clearly state that the Montreal YMCA is no longer unilingual Association.

Let's examine this statistical analysis in detail.

THE NATIONAL LINGUISTIC CENTRE

1- The role of the Centre

Over the years, the National Council has understood the importance of functioning in the 2 official languages of Canada. A service for simultaneous translation has been established at Geneva Park and certain publications are already bilingual.

The objective of the National Council, in order to bring to reality its desire to serve all the communities of Canada, was the creation of a National Linguistic Centre. This Centre is now in operation through a contractual arrangement with the Montreal YMCA. However, it is clear that there is no question of copying the work done in Montreal and of applying it in full in the various regions of Canada. The Linguistic Centre is national, therefore it must reflect the Canadian diversities. Each region having to develop its bilingualism capacities will be analysed and orientated according to its own requirements, its own particularities, its own originality. The Centre will provide professional linguistic services, attempt to standardize the terminology used in the YMCA's, organize language training according to a proven and adequate methodology and help the Associations in their planning to better serve their community.

Generally speaking, the Centre will play animation and technical role. The analysis of the 4 functions of the Centre will help to clarify these two initiatives.

2- Functions of the Centre (annexe IV)

- 1- Language training for staff members
- 2- Translation of materials
- 3- Conducting orientation sessions for National Council leaders
- 4- Support and encouragement to Associations to provide services in both languages where appropriate and the development of a lexicon for technical YMCA terms.

For the first year of operations (Phase I of the project), the Centre has prepared a realistic and feasible action plan. The concrete results of the year will serve to establish the course to be followed for 1981-82-83 etc.
(See annexe IV).

CONCLUSION

The adoption of a National Linguistic Policy and the application of this Policy give an indication of the will of the Canadian YMCA federation to better serve the total community.

The Federal Government has provided a substantial subsidy to the YMCA federation. The collaboration of members of the Secretary of State, and especially that of Mr. Denis Roberge and Mr. Terry Tétreault, has been invaluable. It is worth mentioning that they are still working with us and that they have understood the human meaning of this request for money.

The YMCAs have an important role to play in our country, a role that goes far beyond the political frontiers... Man wants to develop himself, man needs challenges, man belongs to a collectivity, man is limited, man wants to give, man belongs to a whole... These fundamental philosophical ideas are the very base of YMCA activities. With no discrimination of religion, color, race and age, all are invited to participate in YMCA activities. More than one million of Canadians of all ages are already participating in the various programs offered by the Association. Bilingualism will allow more Canadian to join us.

Thus, the success of the implementation of the National Language Policy is very closely linked to the very meaning of a YMCA.

The means that are outlined in this document will contribute to a massive broadening of the capabilities of the YMCAs of Canada in their struggle for human development and social action.